

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An iron fortification system suitable for foods and beverages, the fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Claim 2 (original): An iron fortification system according to claim 1 which is in powder form.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A beverage which is fortified with iron, the beverage containing a fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A beverage according to Claim 3 which contains a fat.

Claim 5 (previously presented): A beverage according to Claim 3 which contains polyphenols.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A beverage according to Claim 5 which includes a chocolate beverage base.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A beverage according to Claim 5 which is a liquid chocolate drink.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A retorted liquid beverage which contains lipid and a stable iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;

adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

dissolving ~~a ferric salt~~ sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;

adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;

combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and

collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A retorted liquid beverage according to Claim 8, which is a chocolate containing beverage.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A retorted liquid beverage which contains polyphenols and a stable iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The retorted liquid beverage according to Claim 10 which is a tea beverage.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A beverage powder, which contains lipid and an iron fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A beverage powder according to claim 12 which contains chocolate.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A process for the preparation of a ferric-caseinate complex, the process comprising:

- dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
- adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
- dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
- adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
- combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
- collecting ferric-caseinate complexes which form.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A process according to claim 14 in which the pH of the casein solution is adjusted to about 5.8 to about 6.0.

Claim 16 (previously presented): A process according to claim 14 in which the pH of the ferric solution is adjusted to about 5.4 to about 5.6.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A process according to claim 14 further comprising neutralizing the ferric-caseinate complexes to a pH in the range of about 6.0 to about 7.0.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A process according to claim 14 further comprising drying the ferric-caseinate complexes to powder.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A process according to claim 14 in which the pH of the combined ferric solution and casein solution is adjusted to about 5.8 to about 6.2.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A food containing a fortification system comprising a ferric-caseinate complex obtainable by:

- dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
- adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
- dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
- adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
- combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
- collecting ferric-caseinate complex.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A food according to Claim 20 which contains a fat.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A food according to Claim 20 which contain polyphenol.

Claim 23 (previously presented): A food according to Claim 22 which is a chocolate beverage base.

Claim 24 (previously presented): A food according to Claim 22 which is a liquid chocolate drink.

Claim 25 (currently amended): A product including a ferric-caseinate complex made of food grade ingredients obtainable by:

- dissolving a casein source in an aqueous liquid to provide a casein solution;
- adjusting the pH of the casein solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
- dissolving a ferric salt sulfate in an aqueous liquid to provide a ferric solution;
- adjusting the pH of the ferric solution to about 5.4 to about 6.2;
- combining the ferric solution with the casein solution and adjusting the pH to about 5.4 to about 7.0; and
- collecting ferric-caseinate complex.